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CHARLES GORDON AMES

OCTOBER 3, 1973

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Chas. Gordon Ames

Seventy-five Years

THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

OF

CHARLES GORDON AMES

Minister of the Church of the Disciples, Boston

OCTOBER 3, 1903

Our greater birthdays are the days when we enter into truer life,
and come into possession of that inner good which is our proper
inheritance as children of God.—C. G. A.

BOSTON

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**More than all speech the Silent Order saith ;
All laws of life are articles of faith ;
Who loves and seeks for good, behold he prayeth !**

Foreword.

The large parlors of the Church of the Disciples were crowded, Saturday afternoon, with parishioners and friends who gathered to celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of Dr. Charles Gordon Ames. The rooms were beautiful with brilliant autumn leaves and clustered barberry branches, and the faces of the people were radiant with the spirit of the occasion. "We are glad he was born, and we are glad to be his friends," was the prevailing thought which found frequent expression. Seventy-five years are not many when one reaches the end of them with such firm hold on life's best interests and such youthful forward-looking for good yet to come. Successive speakers paid tribute to Dr. Ames's manliness, his faith and goodness, and told of the help he has been in uncounted ways, even to lives that have barely touched his own; but, after all, the impression left by the afternoon was even less of admiration for noble work accomplished than of the love he has won and kept. Loving friendship shuts him in and holds him close, and the sure evidence of it must be dearer to him than any amount of praise and honor.

The first hour was given to informal greetings and congratulations. Dr. and Mrs. Ames stood with children and grand-

children about them, making each friend feel a special, personal welcome. Mr. Edward A. Church presided over the more formal part of the reception.

Mr. Frank Lynes, the organist of the church, opened the exercises with a piano solo, and was followed by the various speakers herein reported. But no report can possibly do justice to the spirit and feeling which characterized these expressions of esteem and affection. An attempt is here made, however, to preserve some formal record of an occasion so memorable to those who shared in its happiness, with a thought also for the friends who could be present only in spirit, but who were equally entitled to a participation in the high festival. Future readers, also, may be glad in this testimony of a noble past, and children's children be proud of this record of their sire.

Representative selections from the letters of many friends have been added, and a poem by William Lloyd Garrison. The closing chapter—a discourse preached in the Church of the Disciples on the day following the celebration—seemed so much a part of the exercises as to make the printing of it both desirable and imperative.

The selected verses at the beginning and the close of the volume are from the poems of Dr. Ames.

*There are deep things of God: push out
from shore!*

ADDRESSES.

MR. EDWARD A. CHURCH.—*Friends*,—This is a meeting of the Church of the Disciples; and, whatever may be our various religious connections, we are all members of this church while we celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of our honored minister.

My own part is but to act as a more or less animated programme, to introduce speakers far better known than myself and to extend a welcome to those who, I hope, are already assured of one. We are cordially glad to have so many present this afternoon; and, if we miss some whose faces were once familiar here, may we not feel that they also have an affectionate interest in the day we celebrate?

But this is not a funeral. We come to praise Cæsar, not to bury him. I think some of our poets must have noticed that the best rhyme for seventy-five is "alive." As I look about upon our elderly friends (with a fellow-feeling), I realize the truth of the old saying: "The good die young." And this is true because the converse is equally true: The good *live* young, so that, if our minister should pass the century mark, he would still die young, because he "bears eternal summer in his soul." And the rest of the quotation I leave to our orators.

Whoever knows our congregation will understand, I think, why the church is always spoken of in the feminine. Our re-

vision of Paul's injunction reads, "Let *not* your women keep silence in the churches"!

One of those from whom we most love to hear, one who has made the "Disciples School" of note, and who has been foremost in many another good word and work, is the chairman of the birthday committee, Mrs. Clara Bancroft Beatley.

MRS. BEATLEY.—*Dr. Ames and Friends*,—Our presiding officer truly says we are all to be considered this afternoon the Church of the Disciples. I extend to you greetings, and through you, greetings to the absent ones who would gladly be present to join us this day in congratulations. Indeed, when we tried to make out a list of those whom we wished to invite, we found no end to it. We must go to a world's directory, and follow its leading, would we make sure of including in our celebration all the friends of Charles Gordon Ames.

Our minister in preaching from the text, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," has taught us that loving one's self is an essential part of the fulfilment of the law. "Love thyself," "love thy neighbor as thyself." In harmony with this teaching we have made this birthday celebration the occasion, first of all, of happiness to ourselves. We have raised a fund of \$500 to be expended for a portrait of Dr. Ames, to be placed upon the walls of the Church of the Disciples.* It is a satisfaction that we have been able to secure Mr. Raymond M. Crosby to paint the portrait,—one who is of our minister's own household, and who will unite with artistic skill the happy conditions for successful painting. We have in anticipation a twofold enjoyment. We shall forever prize the portrait for the subject and for the artist.

There are many things I wish to say. There is one thing I must say. The covenant which you see printed here upon our walls is the covenant of the Spring Garden Unitarian Church

* The Birthday Fund, two weeks later, amounted to one thousand dollars. A testimonial gift was sent by the Church to Dr. Ames.

in Philadelphia,—a church founded by our minister before his coming to Boston. Divine moment in the history of the Spring Garden Church, when Mr. Ames, after earnest deliberation upon a form of covenant, exclaimed to a young member of that church,—one who was near and dear to him, Mary Lesley,—“Mary, I have it! *In the freedom of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.*” To-day one hundred or more churches scattered over our country are united in the use of that covenant, either in the original or in slightly modified form. It has been our privilege as a church to share the freedom of its spirit, and to place it upon our church book in close and harmonious relationship with the original covenant of the Church of the Disciples.

When I think of the life-work of our minister, I am reminded of the motto which one of our honored members treasures as the gift of her mother in childhood: “Teach me to live.” He has learned to live, and he has been teaching us the lesson all these years. It is Maurice Maeterlinck who says, “See that you give not away the oil of your lamp, though your lamp be never so small: let your gift be the flame, its crown.” Our minister has taught us to give of the flame, the crown. He stands to-day with a crown of victorious life, that life to go on, we hope, triumphantly for years and years before us. So we are here not in sadness, but in great rejoicing for that constant renewal of life whose secret our minister found in his youth, has told to the world and will go on telling through the ages. Nothing finer has been written than those lines of forty or more years ago in which he gives to us his secret:—

“There are deep things of God, push out from shore;
Hast thou found much? Give thanks and look for more!
Dost fear the generous Giver to offend?
Then know his store of bounty hath no end;
He doth not need to be implored or teased:
The more we take, the better he is pleased.”

I know that Mr. Church wishes me to bring some crown of gratitude to Dr. Ames, some expression of the mind and heart of our church for its minister. I have tried to determine what that crown should be. When I think of the hearts that have been comforted, the joys shared, the darkness made light, the weakness made strength, and the bond made free,—how can I bring to this man any crown?

It is but a legend, I know—a story of noble childhood, youth and manhood, centuries ago—yet it is true for us, to-day, as we celebrate the life of our minister. The companions of that wonder child of old wove for him a beauteous crown only to see it fade and wither as they placed it on his youthful brow. The tradition grew that this child could wear no earthly crown. Years sped on and on, and again came a time “for crowns to fall.” His friends and brethren at great price brought a crown of purest gold, wrought with exquisite workmanship, sparkling with rare and costly gems, with proud thought to crown the worthy head so loved and honored. It turned to ashes in their eager hands. They could only bring their longings, and reverently marvel at a soul beyond all earthly power to crown.

So it is that I can bring for you, beloved Church of the Disciples, no adequate gift with which to crown our minister. We must still go on, content to receive from him more by a million-fold than we can ever hope to give!

“Why crown whom Zeus has crowned in soul before?”

The poet crown,—the preacher, prophet, friend;
But *soul* of soul the sunrise glory wore
When heaven first flashed the charm of gods to men.

“So crowned, we speed thee on thy onward way;

Still hold thee fast, thy journey not yet o’er.
Till thou each soul touch with thy crown of day,
Thou crowned of heaven, whom Zeus has crowned before.

"Behold through countless years, through endless space,
The spirit crowned with morn throw wide each door,—
Arch-angels radiant stand, surpassed in grace,
To crown whom Zeus has crowned in soul before."

CHAIRMAN.—When we understood how many Unitarian ministers would be glad to pay their tribute this afternoon, we realized that to hear from them all would be to carry the time over into the next birthday. So we looked for the man who could but represent the gifts and graces of this eminent body, and such an one was found in the president of the American Unitarian Association, Rev. Samuel A. Eliot.

MR. ELIOT.—I have stepped up here, sir, before all these good folks, just to bring you a heartfelt of love and gratitude and honor from your brethren. We are glad that you were born, even if it was seventy-five years ago. We are glad you were born poor. That is the best start a young fellow can have. We are glad that, when you were born again into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, you gave yourself to this curious business of the ministry, and that then you had the grace and the grit and the gumption to associate yourself with this little band of ours that is trying to preach and live a free and spiritual Christianity. There is no career like it, is there, in the rich and satisfying relations into which it brings a man with his fellow-men? My brethren would bid me say to you, sir, that they rejoice with you that, in a world where there are so many good things that a man can turn his hand to, God has given to us the best of all in that he permits us to bear witness to his truth. You think you have been a pretty poor witness sometimes, that there is still room for improvement. That's one of the delights of life. You tell us sometimes you say and do things that you wish you didn't say and do, that you sometimes leave undone the things that you ought to have done. That is one reason why we love you. If you were a disembodied spirit or a spotless saint, we should be afraid of

you; but you are mightily human, and that is why we love you. God pity the man who has overtaken his ideals, and who has nothing to do but fold his arms and thank God that he is not as other men are. God bless the man whose visions are still unfulfilled, and who, with strong words of cheer and comfort and with high example, still points the way to those who are struggling up the steep ascents of youth or plodding along on the dusty uplands of middle age.

And we are glad, too, sir, that you are old. I don't see why it is sometimes supposed to be the highest compliment we can pay to a man of seventy-five to say, "How young he seems!" That is as if we should admire the shrivelled petals at the end of an apple because they hold some dim memory of a blossom, and care nothing for the fruit that has come through their withering. It is better to be praised for recorded duty than for hopes that may never be fulfilled. The praise of hope is sometimes pretty thin in strain; but when we hear "Well done!" said to a man who has been through many trials and troubles and disappointments, who has sailed through the storms of dark and lonely seas, and kept his rudder true, then we hear worthier praises. Into the life of a man who has been through many experiences there come a tenderness of spirit, a love-born courtesy, a power of communion with unseen realities, that are infinitely endearing. How much in this hurrying world we need these gentler aspects of character to temper the harshness and to blunt the rough corners! We are the better for knowing you and working with you and honoring you.

I haven't told you half the reasons why we love you; but here are our hearts, sir, and all the brethren say, Amen.

CHAIRMAN.—When we give a party, we like to call in our neighbors; and our relations with Shawmut Church have been so amicable that I am sure we shall all be glad to hear from its pastor, Mr. McElveen.

MR. McELVEEN.—This is an unanticipated joy. I didn't know until a moment ago that I was to have the privilege of expressing publicly my high regard for Dr. Ames. I rejoice in this opportunity of speaking for myself and my church. Between these two churches there has always been the best of feeling, and their pastors have always been the best of friends. Indeed, I think I may also speak a word for my ministerial brethren here in the South End. We all are fond of,—no, fond is not a strong enough word,—we all love your minister. We count it a great privilege to have known him and to have fellowshiped with him. We give him a different title from that you give him. The members of the great Catholic Church call their priests "Father." We call your minister, not Dr. Ames, but Father Ames; and we speak of him thus, not because we South End ministers are younger men, but because his is a fatherly and friendly heart. To us he is Greatheart Ames.

A member of Shawmut Church, who is connected with the law department of one of the great railroads, told me this story. When an accident occurs, like running over a cow or sheep, it is necessary for the conductor of the train to make out a report. Upon the prepared blank there are a number of questions to be answered. One of the questions reads, "The disposition of the carcass." If the killed animal is in such a condition that it can be given back to its owner, the award of money is not so large as if the animal's flesh was so mangled as to be worthless. Upon the very first day of a new conductor's service the locomotive ran into a cow that had persisted in remaining on the track. The new conductor made out his report. The number of the train, the location of the accident, the engineer's name, and several other questions were properly answered. For a moment the new conductor hesitated when he came to the query, "The disposition of the carcass." Then he wrote in answer to that query the words, "Mild and gentle." Now some of us feel just that

way about your minister. He has been our spiritual father, adviser, our elder brother, and friend; and he has been mild and gentle with us. Behind the mildness, however, we felt there was much power; and in the gentleness we knew there was much strength. His mildness was not timidity, nor was his gentleness weakness. He has been as fearless in exposing wrongs as he has been kindly and generous in bestowing favors.

And that is why we have loved our Father Ames and have enjoyed his counsel and companionship. And I am speaking now, friends, not only for myself and my church, but for the ministry hereabouts. I am speaking for hustling, bustling philanthropic Dr. Perin of the Every-day Church, for studious, amiable Dr. Loomis of the Union Church, for popular and magnetic Mr. Johnson of the Baptist church, and for all the rest; and in our fellowship here we have had Jewish rabbis as well as Christian ministers, and I bring to your minister their loving greetings.

Our joy in your pastor's friendship has of late been somewhat tinged with regret. The rumor has reached our ears that this church plans leaving this section of the city. Perhaps there are too many churches here; but we shall sorely miss the Church of the Disciples and its genial, friendly minister. This South End is a most difficult place in which to labor as a pastor. Here the people live close together, but far apart,—close together physically, but far apart socially. There are twenty times as many people here as there were in the days of Dr. Clarke and Dr. Webb. They need church homes and homelike churches as the people of that time did not need them. Here in the South End the preacher need never trouble himself to preach on the query, "Shall we know Each Other in Heaven?" for there is not the slightest probability that his hearers will ever know each other even here on earth. Half the population of this section was not here six months ago. We preach and minister to a proces-

sion. Your church has been a social and spiritual fireside, and your pastor has been a father and friend to many of these wanderers; and so we are sorry you think of going.

By the way, to-day is my birthday, too; but I'm not going to tell you how old I am. I don't know how it may be in your denomination, but it is said that in the Congregational Church we have a dead line. That dead line, some say, is about the fiftieth year. I have more than a dozen years to live and to labor before I reach that line. But Dr. Ames has proved that a minister need never cross the dead line. He is growing yet. He will grow forever, for the power of the endless life is in him. His thought will ever be fresh, and his speech glowing.

I am grateful for this opportunity of bringing this word of greeting and love and congratulation for myself and my brethren.

CHAIRMAN.—The Church of the Disciples has always been a meeting-place for all classes. The rich have never found it to be a needle's eye, and the poor have always been welcome. We have heard from those "upper classes,"—the clergy and the scholar. Now I am going to call upon a plain laboring man,—sometimes farmer, sometimes printer, but always a royal good man and brother,—Mr. George H. Ellis.

MR. GEORGE H. ELLIS.—*Mr. Ames and Friends*,—Do you recognize the man our friend presented? There is one thing he didn't say; and that was that he expected anything in the way of oratory, for which I am very glad. My recollection of, and my intimacy with, your pastor covers considerably more than thirty years; and during that time I have known him in many ways, first as lecturer while he was living in California (I think the first talk I heard Mr. Ames give was way back in the seventies), then as preacher, then as editor

of the *Christian Register*, where I was very closely associated with him.

I wish I could say what I think of him, that I could express my feelings; but it is useless for me to try to do so. It is only about two or three weeks since many of us here present listened to the son of his father at Atlantic City; and, good as that address was, it seemed to me that he could have made it better and much shorter. His topic was "The Kind of Minister Needed." All he needed to do was to point two rows down, and say, "There's my dad." I don't want you to think that I disparage that address, because it was a mighty good one; and those of you who didn't hear it will find it in the *Christian Register*.

Well, as I remarked, I wish I *could* say what I *would* say; but I feel all, and more, than others will express, and thank you for the opportunity to say just this.

CHAIRMAN.—Our minister was never a monopolist, even of his name. One of his mottoes might well be, "There are others"; and we want to hear from one of those others this afternoon,—Mr. Charles H. Ames.

MR. CHARLES H. AMES.—I don't know but Mr. Charles G. Ames may know in his own heart of reasons why he cannot consider himself just the same as the rest of us do. I dare say he may accuse himself of things which make him feel a little short of that distinction, but no one else can do that; and I confess that to me he has always been a saint, and his life about as clear and cloudless as the sky over us to-day. He has, however, had an influence over my own life in the way of *oppression* and *depression* and *suppression* that I suppose would surprise him very much if he knew it. It is owing mainly, I should say, to that middle letter of his. I once wrote to ask him what he would take for that old "G." anyway, and to tell him that, if it were out of the way, perhaps there might be some chance for me.

I will tell you one or two instances by way of illustrating the effect of this middle letter of his upon my own career. Once upon a time I was asked to "deliver a lecture." I wasn't asked to "give a talk" or "read a paper." It was to be a "lecture," and it was to be "delivered"; and I felt correspondingly impressed and exalted. As I rode over to the town hall, I saw the large placards announcing that "Charles H. Ames" was to "deliver a lecture in the town hall." I thought of great lecturers. I thought of John B. Gough and Henry Ward Beecher and George William Curtis and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and wondered how it might seem to be a great lecturer and with three full words to my name. When I got to the town hall, it was full, and I didn't know but fame was easier to attain than I had thought. But I was presently told that this audience was gathered to hear the Rev. Charles Gordon Ames, especially those on the settees in front, which were filled with nice old ladies, who had come because they had so greatly enjoyed his poetry! You can fancy the handicap with which I delivered my first lecture, and how much it had to do with my decision later on that perhaps I wouldn't be a great lecturer, after all. And Mr. Ames has done a good many of those kindly, quiet things, without knowing it, that were very useful and beneficial to me as well as to the rest of the world.

Then I had literary aspirations. It seemed desirable to be a great author. One day Louisa Alcott asked me out to her house in Concord, and said she'd have Mr. Emerson over to meet me. Just think of that! Mr. Emerson to meet me! So out I went. Mr. Emerson came over; and, when I was presented, "Oh," he said, "this is not the Mr. Ames I expected to see." There again, you see, it was Charles Gordon Ames who overshadowed me. I realized that I stood in the shadow of a great name, and that perhaps, again, I'd better give up my idea of being a great author, and content myself with simply being good. I knew that virtue was its own reward,—I had always been told so,—and so I made up my mind that I would

try to be good. I associated myself as much as I could with Mr. Ames.

I will tell you one or two instances from many that I could tell to illustrate some of his helpful and endearing qualities, but which again showed me how far I was below the plane on which he seemed to stand so naturally. One day we stood upon the sidewalk, and I saw something very unpleasant and annoying, and I called his attention to it, and said, "Just look at that!" His instant reply was, "*Don't* look at it: let us look at something *beautiful*." At another time Mr. Ames and I were walking together, and he got in the way of a heavy team, and came very near being hurt. As the teamster shouted his warning, he cursed Mr. Ames, cursed him roundly. Mr. Ames took the warning, and stepped out of the way. Of course I was furious. But Mr. Ames said, "Why, he saved my life." "But," said I, "he swore at you." "Why, certainly," said Mr. Ames, "every man to his own dialect." Well, it seemed to be so easy for him to be a saint; but it wasn't for me.

Then once I had been out in the Philippines, and had come back with my own notions and impressions of things; and down at the Twentieth Century Club I was called upon to give utterance to them. All the "antis" were there, and among them were many of my best friends; and I was grieved that I had to express myself so contrary to their notions and feelings, though there was no help for it. After it was over, Mr. Charles G. Ames came up and put his arm around me, and said, "Cousin Charles, I hate the sin, but I love the sinner." Ah! who but he would ever have done that? And so he has been going on all his life, hating what he believed to be sin, but loving the sinner. And so I celebrate him and praise him, and I hope he will live forever; and I pray God that he may have to help and comfort him some consciousness of the good he has done in this wicked world.

CHAIRMAN.—The committee has had many delightful letters from people all over the country. It would be impossible to read them all, but our friend, Mr. James A. Beatley, has been asked to present a selection from them.

Letters were read by Mr. Beatley from the following:—

Mrs. Alice Ames Winter.
The *Morning Star*.
Ex-President Cheney of Bates College.
Greeting from Germantown, Pa.
Spring Garden Unitarian Church.
President Charles W. Eliot.
Telegram from Rev. John W. Chadwick.
Rev. Minot J. Savage.
Rev. William M. Brundage.
Dr. George M. Bartol.
Dr. George A. Gordon, of the Old South Church.
Rev. Charles E. St. John.
Rev. Thomas R. Slicer.
Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson.
Miss Lucia M. Peabody.
Mr. and Mrs. George W. Thacher.

It was a disappointment to Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, who was away at her summer home in Newport, not to be present. She sent the following verses to enliven the occasion. They were read by Mr. Beatley:—

OUR AMES.

Our Ames is good!
Such as we would
With fond persistence follow,
But that the sin
Which lurks within
Will sometimes beat us hollow.

Our Ames is wise,
Explores the skies,
Yet cares for us,—the earthful.
With us he's sad,
For us he's glad,
And sometimes even mirthful.

Our Ames is dear,
We meet him here
Where he so oft has taught us.
Howe'er we roam,
A heavenly home
Is where he would have brought us.

A Church that stands
For helpful hands
And hopeful hearts he's building;
Its altar-fire
Must still aspire,
Built upon faith unyielding.

A creed of joy
Without alloy
Prevails in his prefecture;
And heaven above
Inspires the love
Which binds his architecture.

This ragged rhyme
Beguiles the time
For one in absence grieving;
With one accord
Let's bless the Lord
That this our Ames is living.

Mr. Lynes then played a Nocturne of his own composition.

CHAIRMAN.—I have no adequate foreword for the next speaker, Edward Everett Hale.

Dr. Hale opened his remarks by telling a story of Helen Keller and a friend. They were talking of a school they were

to open when they left college, and Helen expatiated quite largely upon the way that school was to be conducted. A visitor said, "But, Helen, dear, what are you going to do?" "Oh," said she, "I am going to love them."

DR. HALE.—And that is the duty which this man has taken up for the fun of the thing, because he likes to love. That is the reason the founder of this church found him out at the beginning. He didn't talk about it. He loved Charles Ames because Charles Ames loved him. And that is the reason we are all here to-day, and that is the reason that this church is a centre of life and love and power to this whole land. I am not going to tell you what remarkable things there are in him which you don't know and which I do, for every one of us has his own secret about a friend who is so dear.

CHARLES AMES IS HERE AND ALIVE,
AND CHARLES AMES IS SEVENTY-FIVE.

Now in sixteen hundred and two,
Three hundred years ago,
Gosnold, a man you ought to know,
Brought to view
To all the world of women and men,
Who were going to live or did live then,
Who lived in heaven or lived below,
The rocks and rivers, the meadows and sand,
The certain centre of every land
Which Old England called New England.

Class in arithmetic
Tell me very quick
"How many times, if anybody knows,
Seventy-five go or goes
Into three hundred years?
What appears?"
Why, any fool sees, it goes four times.
Toss in odd numbers to make it even,
And fix the quarters perfectly straight,
And these are the different dates you will see.

Sixteen hundred and seventy-seven,
Seventeen hundred and fifty-three,
And then comes the auspicious date,
Eighteen hundred and twenty-eight,
Of the birth of the man with the best of names,
So dear to you and me,
Charles Gordon Ames.

Seventy-five years ago,
As all of you know, or ought to know,
Charles Ames opened his eyes to see
What is so well known to you and me,
The world, the sky, the land, and the sea,
And New England.

Three hundred years,
It appears;
And for a quarter part of them
This man has lived and moved,
Has learned and taught and helped and loved
New England.

There and there, and here
In New England.
There were seventy-five hard years at first.
You come to better from what was worst,
Log cabins and pumpkins, papooses and squaws,
Hot summers, cold winters, and terrible thaws,
Hard times, bad times, for the old King Land,
And not very good for New England.

Then came some better days,
Three and a half-score years and five,
When people plant and fish and thrive
And are more and more alive,
In their dear New England.

And third and next: as history rolls,
Threescore and fifteen more
Of the years and times perplexed,
Which try men's souls.

Tea parties, massacres, sea and shore
Bloody and sad with war!
Franklin and Hancock, Sam Adams and more,
To save and bless New England.

And then! In the days of peace,
When things are all secure,
Well fixed, and sure,
Not too early, not too late,
Then comes the date
Ordained by Fate,
Eighteen hundred and twenty-eight.
Then comes the man with the best of names,
Charles Gordon Ames.

Threescore years and ten
And five years more,
From eighteen hundred and twenty-eight
Till now!
The reign of the man with the best of names,
Charles Gordon Ames.
Think what comes to our homes!
What comfort in the dollar watch,
The electric light, the modest friction match,
Jamaica bananas and jujube paste!

These are the *things* which eye can see
And fingers handle and tongue can taste,
Steam engines and batteries, trusts and rings,
Railroads and telegraphs, plenty of things,
The rise of nations and the fall of kings,—
Yes, *things* are added to the people who,
Through fog and smoke and tears and pain,
Seek first God's righteousness and reign,—
To whom his heaven is home,
All these *things* come.

And in these threescore years
And ten and five
Has come that Gospel for all men who live,
Which nineteen hundred years ago
The stupid nations would not know.

To them their God appears
 As Father of his children, who
 Gives all his life forever new
 In all the words his love has said,
 In all the things his hand has made,
 In summer's heat, in winter wild,
 In every heart-throb of his child.
 I AM, I AM,
 OUR FATHER DEAR,
 Nearer and yet more near,
 In every breath of life, in every drop of blood,
 The Re-all Presence of the Living God.
 This is the truth our dear Charles Ames can teach,
 This is the Gospel for his love to preach,
 First, second, last, in every happy year,
 The Word of Words,
 I Am, and I Am here.

CHAIRMAN.—We have gradually been getting a pretty good estimate of Mr. Ames; but it seems to me before we close we ought to get some more intimate view of him, and I am going to have some members of his own family tell us what they know of the real Charles G. Ames. We will begin with Mrs. Edith Ames Crosby.

Mrs. Crosby read a poem. (At her request, not published.)

CHAIRMAN.—That is beautiful, but there isn't enough of it. We must probe a little further, and perhaps get some light on the old tradition respecting ministers' sons. Mr. Charles W. Ames.

MR. CHARLES W. AMES.—I take great pleasure in bearing my testimony to the good character, to the fair average conduct, and to the general usefulness of Dr. Charles Gordon Ames. Perhaps I have known him longer and more continuously than any other person. I have followed his career very closely for many years,—indeed, I followed it for a long time in per-

son. You remember the Methodist minister's daughter who declared she was born all along the South Shore. That is something like the impression left on me by my own childhood. I followed Dr. Ames through some seven states before I finally got tired of the nomadic habit, and settled down. I have also been a parishioner of Dr. Ames for a longer time than most of you, probably. At first my attendance upon the services which he conducted was in part involuntary. Then followed a period of acquiescence; and finally, as time went on, I began to develop a positive liking for his preaching, until now I lose no opportunity to hear him whenever I am in town. Mr. Ellis in his very pleasant little speech referred to a high privilege that was imposed upon me recently, when I was called upon to talk to the theme "The Kind of Ministers Needed," at the National Unitarian Conference; and he has very truly suggested that my remarks might have been advantageously cut much shorter. I thought myself that I'd like to say, "We need to have every year a hundred more ministers just like my pa."

There seems to be a general prejudice against the praise of a father by his son. Although I see no sound reason for this prejudice, I should certainly defer to it in public; but here in the bosom of the family I may certainly say what I think about my father. There is no room for vanity for me in his achievement. I didn't do it, and I have no responsibility in it. So I shall speak more freely at this time perhaps than the canons of etiquette would permit me. This may be somewhat embarrassing to you, Dr. Ames, but cheer up, sir, you didn't do it either: it was the Holy Ghost, the spirit of the Lord.

I wish to say two things about my father. One statement comes from the most intimate sort of knowledge of him, and it seems to me that it is simply the voicing of the impression which he has made on everybody with whom he has come in contact. He has a *gift* for human relations. I have seen an

adage to the effect that "a man may travel through the world and sow it thick with friendships." That describes Dr. Ames's seventy-five years on the earth perhaps better than anything. I met last summer a very attractive young woman from a distant city foreign to this country, who, upon hearing my name, wanted to know if I were related to Dr. Charles G. Ames, of Boston, and I cheerfully admitted that I was. Then she went on to give a vivid characterization of what seemed to her a remarkable quality of his, a power of sympathy and understanding, which led him into the most direct relations with his fellow-men, and enabled him to be of the greatest personal help to them. I recognized the picture, and asked when she knew him. She told me that she met him once only, on some social occasion, shook hands with him and spoke with him for a few moments. It seemed to me that her description not only showed her own insight, but marked the quality which has endeared this man to thousands of men and women and children all over the country. I have seen this beautiful relation of pastor and people grow up in many localities. I have seen it bear fruit abundantly. So it is that, when we hear Dr. Ames's name, that is the picture that first comes to us,—a friend.

My other observation is rather less personal. Dr. Ames has been most happy in his occupation. "A curious business" Mr. Eliot has called the ministry, and so it is from one point of view; but it has some pleasant features certainly. Happy is the man whose occupation makes him deal with congenial material. Yesterday I noticed on the blank wall of a New York office building a sign which caught my fancy: "So and So, Dealers in Opals." What a lovely business! Think of spending your life handling opals, having them gleam out at you through their translucent milkiness, learning to know them individually, appraising their iridescent beauties, comparing them, seeking eagerly for perfection in them, showing them to others, and sharing the joy of the customer in

their exquisite qualities. Think of a business like that,—dealing in the sweetest, cleanest sort of material! Dr. Ames has been dealing all his life in gems, the pearls of purity, the glowing rubies of human sentiment, and love, the sparkling diamonds of God's truth in crystal form. These have been given to him, and he has gathered them. He has dealt them out to all mankind, and he has enjoyed to the full his high privilege. I am sure he has been happy in our appreciation of his gems; and may he long continue to be so!

I want to say in behalf of his family, those of it who are here present, and the larger number of his descendants who are far away in Minnesota, that we are very glad that, after he has passed his *Wanderjahren*, he should have come to such a haven of rest as the Church of the Disciples. There is a theory prevalent about here, I suppose, that it is a sort of reward of virtue, his coming back here to Boston to live. But we from other regions don't think so, because we think virtue is its own reward. Neither do we think it is a penalty for sins committed, because we don't know of any sins that Dr. Ames has committed that should subject him to a penalty. But we do know that he has found a home in Boston and in the Church of the Disciples, and we appreciate the love which you have poured out upon him and the hearty support and co-operation which you have given him. I know it is not necessary to thank you for this, for you have had your reward in the doing of it; but we, his family, feel gratitude to you, and we share to the full your love for Dr. Ames and his love for you.

CHAIRMAN.—It would be presumptuous in me, at this stage of the proceedings to present any shallow rhymes of my own, and that is why I read these verses. In case you see in these lines any similarity to what has preceded them, I want to say that none of the previous speakers have had access to my manuscript:—

Who marks the score of Time to-day,
The tally of the years?
Let all the leaves of Life turn gray
While green its heart appears!
There is no death's head at our feast,
With grisly moral rife:
We turn our faces to the East—
And pledge a sun-lit life.

We cannot, as "our aged saint"
Salute this blithesome friend,
Nor build a biographic plaint
Where dates with dirges blend.
With gayer notes the staff we span
And pipe a livelier tone,
Since ever has the sterling *Man*
Through all the sainthood shown.

Perhaps the "hustle" of the West
On him has left its mark;
Perhaps his Philadelphian rest
Has made him love a lark:
But, whatsoever be the cause
'Tis very plainly true
He's still the liveliest of our boys
In pulpit or in pew.

Vainly would the "Disciples" try
To claim him all their own:
Wherever hungry spirits cry,
His ministry is known.
And never since his day of birth
"*Declining* years" we find:
His parish is the whole round earth,
His church all humankind.

Who'll fix this reverend rover's place
In cyclopedic lore,
'Twixt Massachusetts' cradling grace
And the Pacific shore?

And, if of Unitarian drift
This Catholic may be,
Remember by a Baptist gift
He got his double D.

From climes or creeds, as fortune wills,
His heart endowment gains:
The vision of uplifting hills!
The wideness of the plains!
And they will surely see who scan
Our new "Colonial" roll
There's naught "Imperial" in the man
Except his royal soul.

Psalmist or scientist in vain
May seek to set his bound:
Whatever be his years, 'tis plain
No dot-age will be found.
So well his spirit, sane and live,
Keeps with the flesh its pact,
That, though he pose as Seventy-five,
He'll still "like sixty" act.

May he forgive the saucy pen
That frolics with his fame!
He'll really have to do so when
It proves himself to blame;
For, if his sermons could not win
In all these years my awe
It must be they were stronger in
The Gospel than the Law.

Those sermons! Now in barrels neat,
Like ripening wine, they lie,
Some of the puncheons labelled "Sweet,"
And others "Extra Dry."
But still the vintages he trod
Our thirsty souls beguiled,
So well he knew to "spare the rod"
And yet not "spoil the child."

Reverend and dear! no more I mock
The crowning of your years,
Lest with a laugh I should unlock
The gate that gives on tears;
But, as along your road I pass
My graceless hand I stay
To drop this knot of wayside grass
Among your wreaths of bay.

CHAIRMAN.—Friends, all that has gone before is an introduction to the last speaker, and further words from my inadequate lips would be superfluous. The product of seventy-five years spent in “the Worship of God and the Service of Man” is before us—the patriot citizen, the devoted minister, the beloved friend, *Charles Gordon Ames!*

MR. AMES.—Your eyes shoot me all to pieces, and I don’t know that I shall bring myself together in very good order. I am unwillingly willing to take part in this function. My first duty is to thank you for this generous outpouring of human kindness; and I am sure that every hand I have clasped has felt like a heart, and that I have put my own heart into my own hand. The greeting has been genuine, and that of itself is reward for coming here to meet it.

And yet there is something bitter-sweet in all this. My public life of more than half a century has been accompanied by another private and personal life, which no one has known but myself. The tendency in public life is to put on something; to do the decent, orderly, expected thing; to put it on as one puts on his best coat to go into company. So I have discovered that there are two of me. I’ve heard something of one of them this afternoon, but there has not been very much said about the other fellow; yet I have lived with him, for seventy-five years, and had some private interviews. I

know him better than you do. The best things you have said have had some truth in them; but you might have said some very different things that would have had truth in them. I know I do not deserve any unmixed approval or praise. Your partiality and kindness—delicious as it is to my taste and welcome to my ear—is offset by a consciousness of human imperfection, error, failure, defeat, personal misgiving, frequent self-disapproval. I am very glad to dismiss that side of my life; for I think my sins are about the worst property I possess, and very gladly unload them. When you talk of saintliness—oh, heavens, how little you know! The good Methodist brother rose in the class-room, and said, “If you don’t believe I’ve got religion, just ask my wife.” There are very few of us who would like to make that reference.

The necessity is upon me to respond to your generosity; and I do it with all my heart, and wish I could do it with all my head, which has been somewhat bewildered. Looking back, as one must sometimes, Dr. Hale; looking in, as one is obliged to do, in order to get acquainted with himself; and looking down, to see where one’s steps have been taken and to mark the quality of his own tracks,—looking back and in and down, I have wished sometimes I might be like those creatures described in the Apocalypse, full of eyes before and behind, and with a range of vision that sweeps all creation.

If there is ever anything that can put a man under the heaviest sort of obligations to behave himself, it is the fact that he is set up as a public clock, by which others may regulate their time and life. It is a serious matter to stand among men for God. I don’t mind having lived seventy-five years. Many a toad has lived longer than that. The question is, What has been done with it? Well, you’ve given your testimony. I thank you for your appreciation of what has been done,—not by me, but, as my son said, through me,—and I cannot take to myself the least of all the credit you have given me. Swedenborg tells us that when the angels see a man taking

credit to himself, for wisdom or goodness, they wonder that he is so stupid. Then, on looking more closely, they see that he is thievish,—willing to take what doesn't belong to him. All life is from one Source, and therefore the praise bestowed on human beings might as well be passed on where it belongs.

But it is something to have been permitted to see the face of the sky and the earth; something for more than twenty-seven thousand times to have the sun shine on my own path as though that were his personal business; something to have walked under the stars. The earth itself is a jewel to us, and is a part of the gift of God to His children. He has fitted it up and furnished it for us; and I have many a time felt how good it was to be alive.

When I was a youngster, I went about whining, thinking the universe out of order; and one of Henry Kirke White's melancholy poems had quite a hold on me,—

"Yes, 'twill be over soon; this sickly dream
Of life will vanish from my feverish brain,
And death my weary spirit will redeem
From this wild region of continued pain."

I rather expected an early doom, yet dreaded it. Then a wiser friend, a man older than myself, said, "If you'll take better care of yourself, if you'll stop burning your candle at both ends,—if, when you retire, you'll really rest,—you'll live thirty years; and, if you live to be thirty, you'll double it." Well, I've doubled it, and got fifteen years beyond. And now I feel as a rather venerable-looking man expressed himself in the cars one day: "When I hear them calling me an old man, it just makes me chuckle." So do I chuckle at the thought of being old. When the people here talk about my being seventy-five, I don't believe a word of it. Never mind the years. We are alive, and we are in the boundless universe, sharers even now of the infinite and measureless life.

There are some other things to be said, and I shall have an-

other opportunity; but this I want to say, now and here and in this presence. The sweetest things I can say to my own soul or to you, the best things that have come into my life, have come from my making an early acquaintance with Jesus Christ. In that school, out of which I hope I may never graduate, I learned to think of the Universal Life of which we know so little as being paternal, and of myself as one of the sons of the family of those who stand erect and look upward in self-respect and reverence; who accept this high rank as appointed, and regard it as the universal right of human beings. Thus faith in human brotherhood, with hatred of everything that hurts and degrades any one of this human family, has been the passion of my life.

Thus, also, it has been impossible for me to be anything else than an abolitionist, an advocate of temperance, and in later days to be *anti* to any *imp* that happened to be around. I know my own imperfection, and have been quite aware that many men much better than myself have differed from me in their judgment on public questions. Nevertheless, whatever seemed to flow legitimately from the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, to that I have felt that I must stand, and to that I must testify, so far as in me lay. So all human affairs have been to me not merely national or American affairs, but family affairs. I have felt bound to recognize my brothers and sisters in all who have set foot on this round earth since I came upon it. By this principle of human brotherhood I have sought to settle every question of my personal duty to you, and you, and you, and of my social or public duty to the larger family of which we are all a part.

Well, everything has an end; and this speech shall have one. These flowers will fade, and all our voices will die on the air; but something abides. It is in our hearts: it is this divine relationship; it is this sense that, while we are so many, we yet are one. Many who are not visible to our outward eyes have been my comrades and companions in former years, and the

majority of those whose hands I have clasped have gone from this mortal scene; but they are with us, and they are with me to-day. This consciousness of a universal kinship and relationship of souls has also grown out of some slight but real acquaintance with God, as revealed in the spirit of sonship. You will not wonder that, having seen this vision, there hasn't been anything else to live for. God grant there never may be, so long as He lets me stay in His universe! Then I shall know that the ties which hold us together here and make our comradeship and fellowship so precious are everlasting, and that we shall belong to each other in that larger circle so long as God lives.

At the close of the speaking, Mr. Lynes played from Chopin. Refreshments were served, and friends lingered. The day itself could hardly have been lovelier, rich in the beauty of autumnal coloring, with a bracingly crisp air, and yet warm in the flooding sunshine. It was the right day for the occasion.

CLARA B. BEATLEY,
WALTER L. SAWYER,
CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE,
CHARLOTTE E. COOPER,
GEORGE A. SMITH,
EDWARD A. CHURCH,

Birthday Committee.

CONGRATULATORY RESPONSES.

Of nearly two hundred responses to the invitation of the committee, from those unable to attend, only a few could be read at the public reception for want of time. The extracts given below fairly represent the prevailing feeling. Several others are of too personal and intimate a character to be reported; but all breathe one spirit, and illustrate the breadth as well as the depth of the public interest,—an interest by no means confined to a single denomination. Of the following extracts it will be seen that the last twenty-two were addressed directly to Dr. Ames.

[From Rev. G. A. GORDON, D.D., New Old South Church, Boston.]

It is almost impossible to believe that your beloved pastor is seventy-five! He would pass for sixty if you had not given the secret away. When I think of the good that he has given, and the beloved friend that he is, I could wish that he might double his existence in this world before taking his exalted seat in the next.

[From Rev. JAMES REED, General Pastor of the Church of the New Jerusalem.]

On my return from a three months' absence in Europe, I find awaiting me your kind invitation to join in greetings to my good friend, Mr. Ames. . . . Wishing your pastor many years of happy useful service, in this world and an endless continuance of the same in the world to come.

[From Rev. HIRAM VROOMAN, Church of the New Jerusalem, Roxbury Mass.]

I shall certainly endeavor to be present, to bear witness to my admiration for Dr. Ames personally, and to my deep appreciation of the spirituality which peculiarly characterizes his teaching.

[Rt. Rev. WILLIAM LAWRENCE, Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Massachusetts.]

An official engagement will prevent my being present. I want, however, to express to you my appreciation of the work that Dr. Ames has done and is still doing in the city, and of his strong, gracious and helpful character.

[From Rev. GEORGE F. MOSHER, editor of the *Morning Star* (Free Baptist).]

The *Morning Star* has always felt a deep interest in Mr. Ames, both on his own account and because he was connected with it in the early days (1843-46), . . . and wishes abundant blessing and peace for him and for the Christian people whom he serves.

[From Rev. A. M. LORD, Providence, R.I.]

I am heartily glad of another opportunity to acknowledge my spiritual indebtedness to Mr. Ames for all the noble words he has said, for all the good deeds he has done, but most of all for all he has been to us of a younger generation.

[From Rev. A. P. PUTNAM, D.D., Salem, Mass.]

Dr. Ames, by his fine abilities, his earnest loving soul, and his zeal for truth, liberty, and righteousness, has drawn to him in deepest respect and affection all who know him and whose friendship and devotion were worth the having. In faith and good works, in wit and wisdom, and in love to God and love to man, he is a worthy successor of James Freeman Clarke of blessed memory. What more could I say?

[From Rev. J. EDWARD WRIGHT, Montpelier, Vt.]

Please give our best wishes to Dr. Ames, with the expression of our hope that for a goodly number of years he may continue to enjoy the consciousness of usefulness, which to souls like his is *life*.

[From Rev. E. A. HORTON, Boston.]

The number of those who bear splendid witness to the possibility of perpetual youth, to progressive faith unbroken by years, is cheering among us; and conspicuous in the array is Charles Gordon Ames.

[From Rev. CARLOS C. CARPENTER, Owasso, Mich.]

The seventy-fifth birthday of one of the best and truest of men! . . . entitled to all the good things that can be said and all the happy things that can be done. The only regret any one can feel is that the birthday suggests the shortening of a very useful and beautiful life.

[From Rev. CHARLES W. WENDTE, of the Parker Memorial, Boston.]

I have known Mr. Ames personally since 1865, when we first met in California, and ever since we have been warm friends. . . . For the rest,

"To know him is to love him,
To name him is to praise."

[From Rev. JOHN D. REID, Greenfield, Mass.]

Dr. Ames is one of the elect few whose speech is "always with grace, seasoned with salt"; and the flight of years does not rob him of his cunning. May there be many of them still to come, and may they deal kindly with him and with the people to whom he so beautifully ministers!

[From Rev. JOHN SNYDER, Wellesley Hills, Mass.]

Congratulations to dear old Charles Ames! According to the judgment of denominational croakers, he ought to have crossed the "dead line" some twenty-five years ago; but he persists in being more vitally *alive* each year he stays with us. God bless him!

[From Mrs. JAMES A. GARFIELD, West Mentor, Ohio.]

The birthday has passed, but on all days there are best wishes in my heart for the friend whom we found so many years ago. . . . To be crowned with so many years of usefulness and worth is a great glory; and sincerely do I hope many more may be added, each better and brighter than the last.

[From Mr. HORACE S. SEARS, Boston.]

In common with his troops of friends, I hold Dr. Ames in deep admiration and affection. Long may he and the Church of the Disciples minister to each other! As for him, I always feel that already—here and now—he has entered into “the joy of the Lord.”

[From EDWARD STANWOOD, editor of the *Youth's Companion*.]

I respect and admire Dr. Ames, and should like through you to wish him a great prolongation of his life of good works.

[From Col. T. W. HIGGINSON, Cambridge.]

Why it is necessary to celebrate a period of life so youthful, I do not quite understand, especially in case of a man so evidently destined for so long and honorable a maturity. Yet in this case, when I consider the amount of public service done by him, I can understand your temptations. . . . But how these young fellows do tread on our heels!

[From MOORFIELD STOREY, Esq., Boston.]

I should have valued the opportunity to tell Mr. Ames how much I prize him, and how much I hope he may be kept in health and strength for many years, to help and inspire us all.

[From Rev. R. W. BOYNTON, St. Paul.]

Dr. Ames was one of the first of the older men to give me a welcome into the ministry. I have never seen or heard him or touched his hand since, but I felt the better for it. Last week, at Atlantic City, he seemed to me at the maximum of his power,—no sign of age yet!

[From Rev. WILLIAM M. BRUNDAGE, D.D., Albany.]

We send our most cordial greetings to our great leader, who continues to give us such rare messages of spiritual beauty and power.

[From Rev. J. L. DOUTHIT, Shelbyville, Ill.]

After tender and grateful reference to the ordination "charge" given him by Mr. Ames forty-one years ago, Mr. Douthit concludes: "Blessings upon the head of Charles Gordon Ames, now and evermore! And blessings forever and ever upon all the people of the Church of the Disciples!"

[From Rev. BRADLEY GILMAN, Springfield, Mass.]

Dr. Ames . . . is of the race of prophets and poets. His high standards of character have directly influenced me more than has any minister I have ever known. I rejoice in his friendship. I congratulate you and all the other friends that we are granted such daily knowledge of what a manly Christian minister may be, and I felicitate the Church of the Disciples upon its possession of so pure and holy a type of leader in this somewhat sordid age.

[From Rev. JOHN C. KIMBALL, Sharon, Mass.]

Ames and I entered the Unitarian ministry at or about the same time, and both from a religious training in other denominational folds. . . . We have always been in intellectual touch; have also been fellow-heretics in our position on all the great live moral questions of our day. It has been very comforting and inspiring to have before me the example of one who has held so unfalteringly to both sides of our religion,—the spiritual and the humanitarian,—and who, while clinging to all that is good in the old, has reached forward with equal faith to all that is good in the new.

[From Rev. THOMAS R. SLICER, Church of All Souls, New York.]

Mr. Ames's birthday represents the coming into the world of a real and beneficent influence. I rejoice in what he has been able to accomplish by his ministry. Perhaps in nothing more do I rejoice than that the traditions of the Church of

the Disciples have been maintained through his activity and devotion; for this church has a very tender place in my heart. Its pastor for forty-eight years, Dr. James Freeman Clarke, was my very dear friend and adviser at a time when I needed the guidance of a strong and kindly hand as I made my way out of my traditional religious home to the freedom which I was to inherit through the labor of just such men as Dr. Clarke. . . . The Church of the Disciples was the first church in New England in which I spoke a word of the new gospel which was indeed to me good news.

[From Rev. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association.]

I hope there will come together a great throng of the lovers of Dr. Ames. There will be many to bear tribute to his widely extended influence as a preacher and a minister; but I wish I could be there to tell a little story of the sort of things this dear man has always been doing for individuals.

When I was a young man, just beginning my ministry at Northampton, Dr. Ames . . . sought me out, invited me to the lovely hill town whither he was going for needed rest, and for two or three days gave me what might be called his undivided attention, talked over the work of the ministry, told me about his early experience, and did a thousand and one things to broaden the life of the young minister whom he was thus blessing. . . . It did a great deal for me. So, when Charles G. Ames wants anything of me, he has only to ask for it. Probably there are ten thousand people in this country whose attitude toward him is the same for similar causes.

[From Rev. W. C. GANNETT, Rochester, N.Y.]

We cannot come save in spirit to the "seventy-fifth" of your and our Charles Ames. In that form,—if spirit is form,—we shall surely be there with congratulations to him and thanksgiving for him. The earliest time of his making that

I ever lighted on was made away back in the primitive days of Minneapolis, where the tradition still lingered in the '70s of his preaching good orthodoxy to the lumbermen at the rafts on the river-banks; and there, a little later, having experienced more light, but no more religion, buttonholing his earlier auditors and telling them, "I said it *wrong*, then!" That is the best kind of beginning for a truth-teller and prophet,—prophet, "spokesman for" God. And that he has tried to be ever since; and we have all come to trust in his word. May he go on seeing more light and more, and "saying it" better and better to you and to us for, say, *ten* years! Bless him!—not forgetting the one by his side who has helped him to see and to say.

[From Rev. A. W. JACKSON, Concord, Mass.]

As I write, the feeling steals over me . . . that, instead of congratulating you on having lived so long, we should congratulate ourselves on having had you so long with us. . . . I think of the flowers, not yours to gather, but the seeds of which you have scattered. . . . One cannot be "seventy-five years young" until he is seventy-five years old, and seventy-five years is a large fraction of the longest life. No matter! Be the rest of the way long or short, it will be toward the golden city of those who have been faithful; and be sure that those whom you have served will follow after you with their love.

[From Rev. S. L. LOOMIS, Union Congregational Church, Boston.]

Warm congratulations for you, that you have so noble a minister, and for him, that he has so true a church.

[From ROBERT TREAT PAINE, Boston.]

Greetings and congratulations on this auspicious day which God has blessed to you and to the world, and especially to your many friends.

[From Rev. H. G. SPAULDING, Brookline, Mass.]

Boston hasn't a church or hall big enough to hold all your "troops of friends." . . . I have been glad that I was in the same ministry, the same church, and the same world with you. Your words have often counselled and uplifted me; but, better than that, by your life you have been a helper of my faith and my joy.

[From Rev. W. I. NICHOLS, Brooklyn, N.Y.]

I am deeply sensible of indebtedness to you for much of what has been most precious in the best fourteen years of my life. . . . But even without this I have the privilege . . . of appreciating the noble stand you have taken during these recent years in behalf of principles which have not been popular, but which, I believe, are of vital importance. . . . It is splendid to be a prophet of righteousness and truth in an age that is not fully ready for them. This is the service that makes men remembered with honor and gratitude through successive generations.

[From Rev. GEORGE L. PERIN, D.D., Every-day Church, Boston.]

We confidently expected to be with you to help celebrate your long, useful, and loving ministry. I had a hug or two stored up. . . . I have made arrangements for you to live twenty-five years longer, and to remain as the active pastor of the Church of the Disciples all that time.

[From Mrs. HELEN CAMPBELL, Eliot, Me.]

In spite of all pulls toward heaven, you have succeeded in keeping your feet on the earth to such good purpose that one may be fairly certain you will in the same fashion master many a year to come,—a hundred, it may be, or more if you want them. Why not?

[From Mrs. MARY A. LIVERMORE, Melrose, Mass.]

I am glad you have lived, and that I have known you a great many years. . . . I have never heard you in public addresses that you have not helped me, nor read what you have written that has not seemed vital with truth.

[From Miss AGNES IRWIN, Dean of Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.]

The blessings that accompany your birthday are yours in fact as well as by right,—“love, honor, faith, obedience, troops of friends”; and I cannot well wish you to have what you already possess. But I want you to count me in as one of the payers of the mighty tribute of love and honor, as one of the troops of friends that you so richly deserve.

[From Rev. S. E. HERRICK, D.D., Mt. Vernon Church, Boston.]

I wish I had been there to help crown you! . . . I do rejoice and bless God for you, and for the fruitful, helpful years of your good service to His kingdom here in Boston.

[From Rev. W. H. WILLIAMS, Episcopal Rector at Waban, Mass.]

I am grateful, very, that I am counted among those who rejoice in your birthday; for so I do with all my heart. . . . My own score is a little less; but, looking forward after the manner of God's calendar, we are of just the same age, and infinitely young.

[From Rev. GRANVILLE PIERCE, Townsend, Mass.]

You are getting a little tired of the praises of men, it must be. Any one would grow tired of angel cake after a while. . . . Tarry as long as you can in Boston. This planet needs you. Those Boston school-teachers need you. Your brethren in the ministry need you.

[From ROBERT A. WOODS, South End House, Boston.]

What a happy crown of years you wear! Would that those of us who have half the years had anything like half the radiance! Your Majesty's most bounden, etc.

[From Rev. O. B. CHENEY, ex-President of Bates College.]

The pleasant associations which began when you were connected with the *Morning Star* office, and continued during your service as a Free Baptist, have caused me to continue to feel a deep interest in your work in your new denominational relations. You and I have felt a mutual interest in reformatory work; and this has helped to cement the bond of friendship. Though I felt sincere regret when you entered another division of God's army, I have continued to rejoice in you as a preacher and worker for humanity.

[From Rev. S. C. BEACH, Wayland, Mass.]

I congratulate you on reaching seventy-five years with so much health and sanity. Go on, my dear boy, and glorify your new youth, as you have done your earlier manhood.

[From Rev. R. N. BELLOWS, Walpole, N.H.]

I hope you feel that I was among that larger company of absent friends who were present in spirit. . . . Not many reach seventy-five in your vigor of mind and heart. You will never be an old man to those who have known and loved you through all these years of useful and effective life.

[From Rev. S. M. CROTHERS, D.D., Cambridge, Mass.]

What a good thing life is, when it can diffuse so much good cheer and strength! I don't think you can realize how much you have done, not only for those who listen to you Sunday after Sunday, but for your fellow-ministers. If we were to

have an old-fashioned Methodist experience meeting, I could give my testimony.

[From Rev. J. W. DAY, St. Louis, Mo.]

To have had seventy-five years of your life is a privilege the exact measure of which you would be the last to appreciate, being so little like the lady who said her modesty was much admired. I doubt even that, in spite of your confidence in the veracity of your friends, you can quite fully believe all they say. But what *you* believe doesn't matter. Some things even a Unitarian must take on faith; and I trust you are submissive and receptive, and just humble enough not to presume to push away one bit of all the gold dust of gratitude, veneration, and affection which is heaped up where you have to see that it is yours.

[From Rev. W. G. ELIOT, Jr., Portland, Ore.]

Not too far to be present in spirit, and to offer with so many others my sincere tribute of grateful affection and reverence.

[From Rev. F. L. HOSMER, Berkeley, Cal.]

A long ministry, yours, and of wider reach and good than you can ever know. That is the joy of all our best word and work.

[From Rev. JOHN W. CHADWICK, Brooklyn, N.Y.]

Do you remember, before you came to Boston, sitting on my piazza and talking about the remainder of your life, how you would get into a corner,—“crawl into a hole,” I think you said? And I remember how surprised I was that after that you should take on the charge of a great city parish. But how splendidly your daring has been justified in the event! Somehow your opportunity brought new inspiration and new strength. And I think it has been so good that just as naturally

as breathing you have gone on in the spirit of Dr. Clarke's ministry, and that you have had his temper and courage in public matters, and, like him and Channing, have been always "young for liberty."

[From Rev. GEO. D. LATIMER, Salem.]

Chadwick said of Dr. Bellows that "he always met young men with a generous expectation." Such has been your attitude and we love you for it, and are the better for this confidence. . . . Such a splendid age as you are enjoying is a challenge to us all to live equally sane and useful lives, and trust in God for the final outcome of our efforts to build up His kingdom.

[FROM FORMER PARISHIONERS AND OTHERS.]

The Trustees of the Spring Garden Unitarian Church in Philadelphia sent a cordial testimonial of the love and gratitude of the congregation which was organized in 1881 by Mr. Ames, and prospered under his ministry for eight years, when he came to Boston.

Another letter, full of affection, came from former parishioners and friends in Philadelphia and Germantown, forty-six of whom affixed their signatures.

Mr. Ames was the minister of the Unitarian society in Germantown from 1872 to 1877. One of the members writes, "I know that the Germantown church will be only too glad to have a share in the best wishes for many happy returns of the day to one who has meant so much to them in the better shaping of their lives."

Mr. Ames was in California from 1865 to 1872, and gathered congregations in various towns. Santa Cruz sent a letter bearing the names of a number of the friends whom he left more than thirty years ago; and San José sent a telegraphic greeting.

[Telegram from San José, Cal.]

A circle of friends gathered here send congratulations,
fraternal greetings, and a God bless you!

THE AMES ALLIANCE.

[Telegram from Meadville, Pa.]

Health and calm weather for your fourth quarter. Love
and salutation.

THE BARBER FAMILY.

[Telegram from Rev. and Mrs. R. W. BOYNTON.]

Two lovers of yours in St. Paul send birthday greetings.

[Telegram from Rev. S. J. BARROWS, Staten Island.]

Loving birthday greetings from Belle and myself.

A CARD OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

I have found it impossible to write individually to the hosts of friends, near and far, whose too lavish kindness and open-handed generosity has made my birthday "loving cup" to run over. May I take this less gracious method of expressing my deep and sincere gratitude to each and all? The new tokens of the affectionate regard of the Church of the Disciples, with the unsparing labor and devotion of the Birthday Committee, have touched a tender spot; yet they have only confirmed in a notable way the uniform experience of the last fifteen years. My head and heart are bowed in glad thanksgiving to God and man.

CHARLES GORDON AMES.

The press gave many notable appreciations, among them a comprehensive article in the *Springfield Republican*, a letter by Mrs. E. E. Marean in the *Christian Register*, and a tribute in the *Boston Herald* from the pen of Rev. Francis Tiffany, under the title of "Genuine and Sham People." The following is a part of Mr. Tiffany's appreciation:—

"It was into some like strain of grave reflection on the problem of who is who and which is which in the matter of age and youth that a great many minds were thrown by the recent public celebration of the seventy-fifth birthday of the Rev. Charles Gordon Ames, of Boston. Curiosity was piqued all the way from advanced senility to sweet sixteen. Was he the oldest or was he the youngest settled minister in the city? Was he the man to make one sure of a sound, refreshing sleep in one's pew, or the man to keep one wide awake over the latest item of news wirelessly telegraphed direct from the kingdom of God? Had he, like a russet apple, just ripened his rarest flavors at the mellowing springtime of seventy-five, or had he become withered, wrinkled, and a bit tart and acid? In fine, was that what all fresh young people, alas! will have to come to some time, or was it simply stimulus to them to labor and pray that they might live on to grow seventy-five years young like him?

"It is all idle to talk about youth as a mere matter of twenty to twenty-five years. Young people there are of that tender age whose lack-lustre eyes, prostration through experience and sense of having sucked the whole terrestrial orange and thrown away the empty skin, would drive any octogenarian in a fair state of preservation to fasting and prayer that he may never reach so advanced a stage of senility as theirs, but die now in the early freshness of his powers. Here is a situa-

tion in which no mere cosmetics in the way of lily white or French rouge or imported curls will help a whit. The red of the cheeks must come of ruddy blood in the veins; the lily white, of maiden purity of soul; and the captivating cures of an instinctive tendril tendency to twine endearingly around everything true and good and beautiful. This may sound stupendously metaphorical, but is the baldest and most literal prose of physics, metaphysics, and all the rest. Indeed, it is just what Wordsworth tried to express, in perhaps superior terms, when he said:—

‘My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.’

“Now it was plain to all who had the rare good fortune to be on hand at the celebration of the seventy-fifth birthday of Charles Gordon Ames that here was a spontaneous tribute of love and admiration paid to a man whose heart had begun leaping up at rainbows from the start, and had kept on leaping up at rainbows ever since, till the rainbow child of five had grown to be the rainbow father of seventy-five,—the one just as young as the other, only a little more so. The ‘Fountain of Perpetual Youth,’ which poor Ponce de Leon failed so tragically to find in Florida, he had found in keeping his soul perennially young through daily cordial welcome to every new light of truth, daily hearty hand-shake with every fresh cause of humanity, and daily renewed communion with the God of the living present.”

TO CHARLES G. AMES ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH
BIRTHDAY.

BY WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

Since David fixed our span of years,
And warned us to be ready,
A longer lease is granted us
By Mary Baker Eddy.

Threescore and ten has ceased to seem
A venerable figure,
So many youthful spirits pass
That goal with ease and vig-ure.

I thank kind nature, and I thank
The famous Concord lady,
For turning sunshine on the years
The Psalmist labelled "shady."

Else had, mayhap, the cruel Fates,
With shears too oft o'erreaching,
Cut short our warm and helpful friend
Who lifts the world by preaching.

Though dear to him the Sunday desk,
The gathering reverential,
The grateful flock he leads with care,
A pulpit more potential

Is his by right of human love,
And courage never failing,
That stands for every noble cause,
While every wrong assailing.

I mind me of his earlier days
When fugitives were flying
From southern savagery by night,
And prisoned martyrs dying.

He cast his lot with those whose names
Drew calumny and jeering;
The negro's wrongs he made his own,
Of consequence unfearing.

And woman blessed him for his aid
When, under burdens aching,
He lent his shoulder to her weight;
Her chains he helped in breaking.

He waited seventy years to see
The nation's base betrayal;
And, while the Church and State bowed down,
He bent no knee to Baal!

And when the people lost their heads,
Like wine-beset Bacchantes,
He followed not his Uncle Sam,
But championed the "antis."

Brave soldier of the moral fight,
True friend of high endeavor,
Pause not, we pray, at seventy-five,
We need such souls forever!

LEXINGTON, Oct. 3, 1903.



More than all speech the Silent Order saith

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS.

*A discourse preached in the Church of the Disciples, Boston,
October 4, 1903, by Charles Gordon Ames.*

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS.

"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."—GAL. v. 25.

In early life I sometimes listened to the talk of elderly men, with a sincere desire to learn something from their wisdom for my own guidance. A venerable senior once gave me a piece of counsel which has served many a good turn: "Charles, take as your motto the words of Saint Paul,—'Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.'"

Now that I have reached and passed the commonly allotted term of years, I find myself asking: What is the most valuable lesson of my own experience? In what words could I sum up the teaching of seventy-five years? It is not easy to answer.

Kipling says,—

"There are nine-and-sixty ways
Of composing tribal lays,
And every single one of them is right."

There might be more than nine-and-sixty forms of good counsel; and if one were called to put his best thought into a telegram of ten words, or to leave as a legacy to mankind the richest and ripest result of a long life, he might well beg for an extension of his own time before making answer. But the words I have quoted from Saint Paul may serve as well as any, if we can read in them a meaning deep enough.

What is it to live and walk "by the Spirit"? I think it means *to accept the Divine as the standard for the human*. "Spirit" is the name—one of many names—which we give to God and to that kind of life which represents God in us. He is a spiritual being: we are spiritual beings, carrying about with us some measure of his wisdom, goodness, and power, and capable of walking, or directing our life-course accordingly. That is, we are made for wisdom, goodness, and power,—made also to advance or grow in these divine qualities. As rational beings, this is our proper way of life. This is what life is for. All that turns us away from this, or hinders this, is no better than death. This is our only concern, our only interest. Nothing else has any real value, except as it helps us to live as spirits; but everything which so helps is of unspeakable value. And, rightly taken, everything helps.

In seventy-five years I have learned nothing that seems of such importance as this life in the Spirit,—this "unitary sweep of all things human into relation with all things divine." I learned it first in a religious school which taught me much else that I have had to unlearn; but this tap-root strikes ever deeper, and I have found no Tree of Life which does not spring therefrom, nor tasted any wholesome fruit which did not grow thereon. "The truth as it is in Jesus" I have found confirmed by the wise teachers of all religions; confirmed by all glad or sorrowful experiences; confirmed not least by the discipline of sin and its retributions. To quench the Spirit in us—be it divine or human—is moral suicide.

It ought to be more plain to us than to the people of any former age that our life is divine in its origin, its uses, and its purpose. Every advance in knowledge or experience confirms the conviction that one Energy sweeps through all creation, that one government is over all worlds and beings. The stars do not know it; the trees and rocks, the birds and beasts, do not know. They live and move and have their being in the spiritual order as truly as we; but they do not know.

Must we not say that our own best life does not begin till we know that we are sharers of the Living Spirit? Then, indeed, that Spirit bears witness within us that we are children of the Highest, born to an immeasurable destiny.

But who needs to be told that he is a living spirit? Why else are we glad of the sun, and of all the sun shines upon? Why are we hungry for knowledge and athirst for truth? Why do we hear the call of duty, and pause at the forks of the road where conscience points like a finger to the right? Why are we capable of reverence for what is above us, and conscious of dependence on a Power not ourselves? What is the mystery we seek to read in each other's eyes?

"We are spirits clad in veils;
Soul by soul was never seen;
All our dim communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen."

Because we are living spirits, we are aware of the infinities and eternities. We peer into the unknown and float in the boundless. Whatever else we learn, this awful and glorious fact of our spiritual nature and relations is brought home to us at every turn. It becomes more awful, more glorious, more sublimely real, as this star-chariot we call the earth bears us on to our unimaginable destiny.

We ask, because we must, What are we made for? What is the world for? Why are we in it? But why are we impelled to ask such questions unless it be that the spirit in us is a spirit of prayer, or a sense of conscious need of light and guidance?

Here is the key to our relations with Nature, which supplies through our senses imagery for our thoughts and the material for all the physical sciences. Here is the key to the affectional life, to our relations with each other and with all humanity. The whole domestic, social, civil, and industrial order must rest on a spiritual basis or break up into a bedlam.

Here, also, is the key to our personal experiences. No man can otherwise understand his own being or explain himself to himself, or respect his body, or find the right use of his faculties, or realize his own dignity, or rise into light and freedom. He must not merely feel himself to be an animal: he must salute himself as a living soul, the child and heir of divinity.

But this does not come at once. We pass through successive phases of development, and our lessons are slowly learned. Childhood, youth, and maturity are like bud, blossom, and fruitage, each leading on to the next; and the sense of more and better to come—the feeling that all so far is preparatory—only deepens with what we call old age.

There are *changes of view*,—some of them very instructive and impressive, at least to myself. The poet exclaims,—

“I stand upon the summit of my years.”

Each ascending stage commands a wider and different prospect. Nothing looks as it did in earlier life. Things that once looked large have shrunk. Some of them have vanished into thin air. Others, which seemed of small importance, have assumed vast proportions and commanding interest. Things once near have withdrawn into dim distance: things once far away have become urgently present. Horizons and sceneries change, as when one is journeying rapidly across the land.

Even language changes. In early life, and at every stage, one is constantly gathering a stock of words from reading and from public or private discourse. How little they may mean! But, as the world opens to the mind, the words cease to be empty sounds or names: they represent facts and realities; they report the thoughts and life of mankind; they are history, biography, science, philosophy, and religion; they open the doors of temples and dungeons, of heavens and hells.

The scale of values changes. One learns to spare many things once desired, and not greatly to miss them. The

difference between success and failure, wealth and poverty, praise and blame, even health and sickness, grows less and less. But peace of mind, an approving conscience, a clear perception of truth, the consciousness of power to act one's part, to live well with others or to go alone, and the sense of kinship to humanity and to the Father of all,—in brief, all that is included in living and walking by the Spirit,—these things become pearls of great price. How can one live three-score and fifteen years and not realize the solid value and excellence of justice, rectitude, reason, truth, faith, hope, and love to a degree impossible in youth, or even in the prime of manhood?

With these changes of view come changes of feeling. The emotions are moderated: joy and grief are tempered; impulse is more easily restrained; care sits lighter. Events do not matter so much. Whichever turn affairs may take, we know they are sure to take another turn. Neither worry nor hurry belongs to maturer life. One is not so eager for green apples, and is more willing to wait for the ripening.

A thousand delays and disappointments teach the gracious lesson of patience. In the ardor and confidence of youth, we expect the millennium in a few weeks; in the sobriety of age, we know that the greatest of Beings is the slowest, and we are content to believe that the outcome which is worth working for is also worth waiting for. Theodore Parker knew one happy man: he enjoyed the processes as well as the results, and so took the good of living as he went along. This is a slow-growing wisdom; but it is nourished by all the serenities of nature, by the age-long creep of cosmic forces, the dignified bearing of the constellations, "the silence of the lonely hills," the unhasting and contented growth of grass and tree.

"The aloe waits serene
The promised advent hour,
A patient century of green
To one full, perfect flower."

Some old people are cynical or despondent in their feeling about the future of the country and the fortunes of the human race; but, whether they weep like Heraclitus or laugh like Democritus over the follies and errors of mankind, it is certain that our sentiments, like our opinions, are modified by the lapse of years. It was old Dr. Sharpe, the Baptist patriarch, who testified that, the longer he lived, the more gentle he grew in his judgments of his erring fellow-men.

To most of us, age brings some sobering limitations. We can spare the public spectacles, like the Japanese visitor, who, when invited to the race-course, replied, "It is already known to me that one horse can run faster than another." Crowds become tiresome, and we are not so eager to know many people. How I used to visit every car on the train, looking for familiar faces! Now I willingly ride all day without seeking recognition. I seem to have outlived loneliness. Perhaps the compensation comes in the companionship of thoughts and reflections that are still all alive with human interest.

There is some loss of flexibility; and with declining strength one is less ready or less able to take up new interests and cultivate an extended acquaintance, or to adapt himself to changing situations. The proverb, "Old men for counsel," is not to be taken at *par* when the old men have grown timid, hesitating, and unenterprising. Certainly, it is not so easy to keep up with the rush of the times. I think Emerson was hardly seventy when he wrote,—

"'Tis time to be old, to take in sail."

But physical constitutions differ like clocks, some of which run down in a day, while others go on for weeks, and tick as vigorously the last hour as the first.

Some burdens fall off; and we are left more care-free. One who can do less work as his sun declines may as well sweetly accept the decree which awards him a reposeful evening. After a day of strenuous activity, it is a lesson worth

learning that the world can go on, and God can possibly take care of His own affairs, even when we are mustered out of service. Yet the feeling deepens that we cannot get along without Him, and that only by the Spirit can we live at all.

We all know people whose old age is like a happier childhood, and who seem to have entered on an infinite and reposing leisure.

“‘What is your aim in life?’ the youth inquired.

‘I have no aim,’ the old man said: ‘I’ve fired.’”

Yet I cannot envy or emulate those who willingly settle into inactivity. If one must do less, why should he not still do what he can?

Mr. Cushing saw the wretched old Zuni women sitting and swaying backward and forward, singing in a cracked and wailing voice, “We have lived too long.” But that is not the song of a Christian. If such a feeling comes, it never stays more than half a minute. Better the Jewish Rabbi Ben Ezra’s healthy note:—

“Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be—

The last of life, for which the first was made.

Our times are in His hand

Who saith, ‘A whole I planned;

Youth shows but half. Trust God, see all, nor be afraid.’”

And happy he who can say with Diderot’s woman, “It is not for having kept me alive so long that I thank God, but for having kept me kind-hearted, gentle, full of feeling.”

It is among my chief causes for gratitude to have lived in a human world,—to have lived with others, and to have shared the common lot. I can sympathize with the very small boy who looked up eagerly in the face of a street-car passenger, and said, “Why, I don’t even know your name!” It has seemed easy and natural to wish it were possible to know and salute every man, woman, and child in the world; for to me all human affairs have been family affairs, and the doctrine

of our brotherhood has been vividly real, though it has often filled me with a certain awe in the presence even of the most degraded. Whatever hurts another, and especially what hurts a whole people, has affected me as a personal hurt. And I can say with Governor Andrew, "I know not what record of sin may await me in another world; but this I know: I have never despised any man because he was poor or ignorant or black."

One feeling has been very strong, and grows ever stronger with the advancing years. All of life, up to date, seems like a preparation for something further on. With much of joy in these more than fifty years of public work, it is yet the joy of an apprentice who is glad to be learning a business not yet mastered. But

"Who draws a line and satisfies his soul,
Making it crooked where it should be straight?"

The Lord has kept me humble by frequent reminders that nothing has been very well said or very well done. This sense of unrealized ideals I accept as an unspeakable blessing and as a pledge of immeasurable good in reserve.

The sense of imperfection in one's work always resolves itself into a sense of personal incompleteness and immaturity. To have done better, it needed that one should have been better. To be made aware of this must be accounted among the greatest of mercies. What hope could there be of moral improvement if one were perfectly satisfied with himself? Yet what hope if one were to throw himself away in despair? Never do I read or hear or think of any quality in saint or sinner, in man or God, without finding it in some bit of my own life-story.

And how ample and various are the resources offered to whoever will take! I acknowledge many benefactors; and still they come! Stored in memory are instructions gathered from many lands and times; and packed away in the interior

tissues of being are the subtle influences by which life is nourished, even as invisible gases and forces nourish the growing tree and build its solid fibre. Some have helped me by kindly recognition and generous praise; others by friendly admonition and faithful reproof; a few even by that prickly and blood-letting sharpness of criticism which shows one his errors and shames him away from his faults. But, as I have found by far the highest benefit in encouragement, it has been my ambition and prayer to be a wholesale and retail dealer in that medicine for the soul.

In seventy-five years, one ought to enjoy a few "lucid intervals," vital moments, or hours of vision, when he realizes that the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are not for God alone, because it is His good pleasure to share all He has with His children. What cheer and strength have come from these occasional insights,—these glimpses of the heavenly blue through the rifts of earth-born clouds!

Has Jesus taught me to understand these visions, or have they taught me to understand him? Both, perhaps. Whenever it has grown clear to me that he lived and walked in close union with the Divine Spirit, and when I have been drawn into some imperfect measure of fellowship with his lowly loftiness, his unreserved and trusting obedience, and his self-sacrificing love of his brethren, I can truly say that he has helped me more as a man and a brother, and as a son always at home with our common Father, than when I used to pray to him as very God. Every life lived in the Spirit—lived in wisdom and love—proves our greatness, our kinship with the divine, and makes it easier to believe, to hope, to labor, and to wait.

There are some queer things about this business of living. Does anybody ever get used to it? Children take it as a matter of course; and of such is the kingdom. Why may we not keep on asking our questions eagerly as they do, yet without fear or anxiety, and with delighted interest?

Be sure that the old do not *feel* old. A curious contradiction! Life seems ever near its beginning,—as if we had not yet fairly tried it, and are only now getting ready. How shall we explain it that our tools get dull just as we are learning to use them? Is not this our real infancy? Why is it that old people *feel* so young in spirit,—the outer life perishing, the inward ever renewed? There are men three times as old as John Percyfield, whose hearts give a leap at his words: “I can see that in so many ways I am still a boy,—frankly happy, frankly affectionate; and, please God, I mean to remain so till the end.”

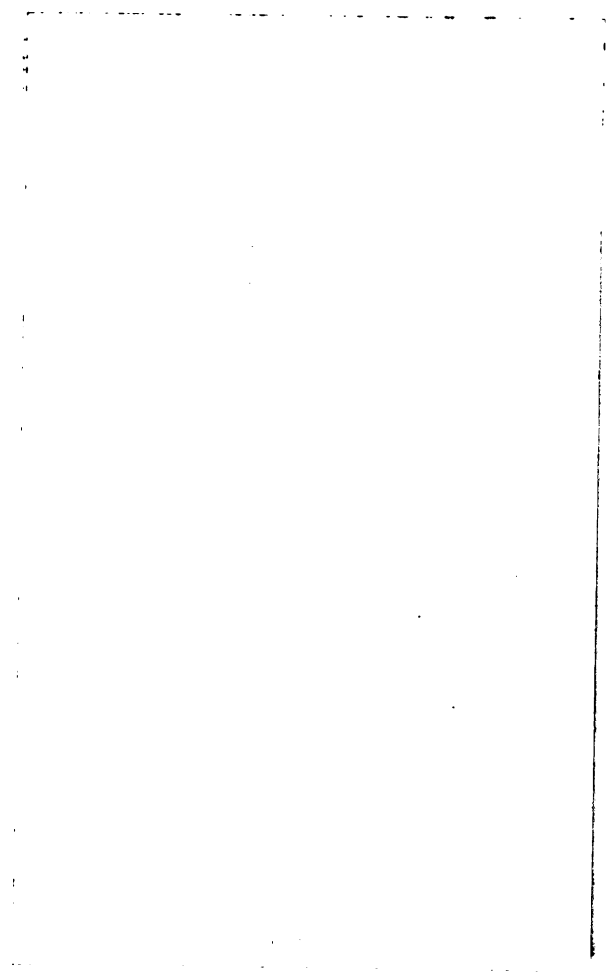
In George Eliot’s later life, when she bravely owned her loss of faith, she cried out: “Immortality is incredible. . . . I could be interested in every thing, if I only had large spaces of time.” At an early day she had said joyfully, “We have infinity in which to stretch the gaze of hope.”

I have not outgrown this earlier phase. My little lifetime has come to me in more than twenty-seven thousand successive days,—always one day at a time. Each day has come in more than eighty-six thousand successive seconds,—always one second at a time. I have never been permitted to know that I should live another day or another second. But this ignorance has not closed around me like a prison wall; for, with every breath that came and went, I could say, *I am!* This affirmation of consciousness by which we wear the awful Name sets us in eternity, and gives us “infinity in which to stretch the gaze of hope.” Let us be content with one day at a time, it being all we have any use for. But the “large spaces” remain unwasted and in reserve. In every luminous and unclouded moment I am restfully sure that the Spirit in which we live and move and have our being is quite competent to make good every promise written or whispered, in our mysterious nature, and thus assure

“Long morrow to this mortal youth.”

A tender Hand smooths down the willing lids ;
An Arm unseen supports the drooping powers ;
And I am borne in peace through night and sleep,
Through time and death, to the appointed morn.







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